

FYI: In Public News Service: Report Questions Environmental Price PA Pays for Fracking

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Report Questions Environmental Price PA Pays for Fracking

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HARRISBURG, Pa. - Natural gas can be a major benefit to Pennsylvania's economy, but the environmental price tag that comes with drilling for it is the focus of a new report from the *National Wildlife Federation*.

The group's Todd Keller, senior manager for public lands campaigns, says the report looks specifically at hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," the practice of using a high-pressure injection of water, sand and chemicals to release the trapped gas. Keller says the report raises questions about how the practice affects a state such as Pennsylvania's water supply, air quality and wildlife.

"We believe this is a really, really timely report, and it's critical for people to get educated on the natural gas issue; what's going out there, what can be done to put in safeguards, etc."

Industry officials say fracking uses cement casings and drills deep into the earth to minimize environmental damage. Keller says the fallout from fracking comes in many forms: clearing forests to build drilling pads, drilling accidents which lead to stream and river pollution, and machinery exhaust which increases air pollution.

Companies drilling for natural gas aren't required by law to divulge what chemicals are used in fracking, but the Environmental Protection Agency is considering regulating the use of diesel fuel in the procedure. Keller says that's the kind of thinking necessary to stay ahead of fracking-related problems.

"If you're using diesel fuel, that is a really bad mixture, so we are opposed to using diesel fuel in the fracking process."

Keller says the National Wildlife Federation recommends there be more research into fracking and how it affects the environment, and also greater transparency surrounding the process. The group also calls for eliminating exemptions for natural-gas drilling in current laws and setting up a process to clean up and compensate in cases where fracking results in environmental damage.

The full report is online at [nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org).

http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/Reports/Archive/2011/~link.aspx?_id=E0EF7765C4F343DC9C856CC24FAE43AC&_z=z

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